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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a study of sociocultural materials used with approximately 50 primary and secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Andalusia, Spain. Because Spain is becoming a more culturally diverse society, and will become even more so in the future as it joins the European Union, the Spanish Ministry of Education has decided to reform the entire Spanish education system from the primary through the university level. Teachers are now required to devise their own syllabi adapted to their own local educational needs and circumstances. The paper catalogues the small tasks and decisions that go into designing and implementing the new, more multicultural curriculum in Andalusia. (Contains 16 references.) (KFT)

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# TOWARDS A SOCIOCULTURAL FRAMEWORK IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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*Introduction*

This paper presents the results of a study of sociocultural materials used with approximately fifty primary and secondary school teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Andalusia, Spain. Due to the transition of Spanish society to a more diversified culture[1], its future inclusion into the European Union and the need to adapt to technological advances, the Spanish Ministry of Education decided to carry out a reform program for the entire educational system, from primary to university level. In 1987, the Ministry presented a Reform proposal to different Institutions of Spanish society, who debated on the specific articles included in said proposal. Two years later, the Spanish Government produced a 'White Book' for the reform of the system. The new programme was put into practice in October of 1990 and later adopted and suited to each of the regional (autonomous) governments.

[1] The 1978 Federal Constitution stipulated that all Spanish citizens had a right to education and the autonomous regions were to increasingly receive competencies. In general, the previous educational system was thought to be very inflexible and little adapted to current trends.

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In June 1992, the Andalusian Education Department introduced sociocultural components as part of the curriculum. Since the reform programme put the teacher in the role of curriculum designer and Vygotskian mediator of instructional processes, both centres and teachers were required to draw up specific syllabi adapted to their own milieu. The teachers had to develop the general sociocultural guidelines in their respective schools, where they encountered several problems during this planning phase.

Since the previous Ministry's syllabi for EFL had been extremely detailed and syntactic-based, one of the most serious problems facing teachers during this period was the transition from an individualistic syllabus design to co-operative, collaborative planning. There was also a considerable void regarding contents and evaluation. This conjunction of problems obliged us, as teacher trainers, to strive to develop a framework which would not only include contents and evaluation procedures but also would provide situations in which teachers as well as students would have to draw upon co-operative strategies.

*The EFL context in Andalusia*

The Andalusian Educational Bulletin (BOJA 56, June 20, 1992, p. 4232) established the following objectives for dealing with sociocultural aspects in EFL teaching:

1. 'Value the relevance of foreign languages as a means of approaching other cultures, other peoples and achieving a better international understanding.'

2. 'Appreciate the social and cultural meanings that foreign languages transmit in as much as they represent other ways of codifying reality and establishing social and interpersonal relationships.'

3. 'Develop a receptive and critical attitude towards information originating from the sociocultural context that foreign languages transmit. Use said information to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes, and reconsider one's own sociocultural context.'

These objectives raised several questions regarding the identification of diverse elements of culture, i.e., the specific contents of the sociocultural framework which might best foster awareness of cultural similarities and differences:

. What cultural schemata do English cultures transmit?
. How do English cultures establish social and interpersonal relationships?
. How do speakers of different varieties of English use underlying schemata to codify reality?

Another set of questions refers to the teaching of sociocultural elements once they have been identified:

. How to approach a variety of English cultures (English, Scottish, American, Canadian, etc.)?
. How to develop receptive yet critical attitudes towards input from English cultures?

. How to reconsider one's own culture and relate it to English cultures?
. How to achieve better international understanding?
. How to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes?

Regarding the above-mentioned, specific contents, a survey of textbooks currently used in secondary schools in Andalusia (Doff & Jones, *Language in Use*, CUP, 1997; Greenall, *Reward*, Heinemann, 1998; Stanton & Morris, *Fast Track to CAE*, Longman, 1999) shows that sociocultural elements are not being provided in any type of unified framework; instead they are being presented in piecemeal fashion. Textbooks frequently approach other cultures by describing daily habits and routines (the 'incidental approach to culture teaching', Valdes, 1991: 21) such as a typical day in the life of a person or persons who are supposed to be representative of the target culture: getting up early, having a big breakfast, a quick lunch and finally a hot yet early supper. The reasons for this behaviour are not the focus of the teaching units, i.e., students are not challenged to compare their own culture with that of the target. The fact that it is often dark early in the afternoon –that climate and weather affect the sequence of daily events as well as eating habits- is rarely a major teaching point.

Eating habits are often criticised because of the abundance of fast/junk food, found in English cultures. It is left to the teacher to clarify that lunch hour is short, that going home, in some cases, is virtually impossible, especially in big

cities, where most of the working population commutes long distances. The fact that fast food, and specially the sandwich are a result of these daily routines, is not given explanation either in the students' textbooks or the teachers' manuals, perhaps making the understanding of the underlying values even more difficult. This indirect approach to sociocultural teaching and learning may respond to the textbook authors' presupposition that any teacher of English will be able to exploit the materials provided without specific prompting. Anorexia, bulimia or obesity are rarely, if ever, mentioned, giving the impression that authors deliberately avoid current social problems.

The traditional family remains in central focus. Although exotic marriages are fashionable in many current textbooks (Acklam & Burgess, *First Certificate Gold*, 1996; Greenall, *Reward*, Heinemann, 1998; Haines & Stewart, *New First Certificate Masterclass*, 1996), discussion is seldom guided towards social organisation, women's and men's roles in society, battering, abuse, (religious) beliefs and their consequences.

Customs and beliefs appear in the celebration of festivities such as St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving Day, Easter, Christmas and New Year's. They appear trivialised, focusing on the holiday spirit rather than on the cultural messages behind the surface manifestations.

In our context, the USA and Britain are the English-speaking countries *par excellence.* Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand or any other part of the English-speaking world[2] are seldom, if ever, mentioned let alone referred to as another cultural source.

English-speaking cultures are multifaceted and should be presented as such. A better international understanding can hardly be achieved if more comprehensive cultural schemata are not being presented, or are presented in bits and pieces of behavioural patterns separated from their context.

The types of cultural "items" that are being transmitted could well be taken from any Anglo-North-American television series. Students are being given an extremely "thin" (Geertz, 1973:12) view of how and why English speakers codify reality in the way they do and not in another; that is, the concept of culture is not being presented as a context as "interworked systems of construable signs" (Geertz, 1973:14).

[2] For English as a world language, see David Crystal (1977) *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

EFL students in Spain are not given strategies to develop a receptive and critical attitude towards input from English-speaking cultures. Instead, they are being offered a series of items or facts that textbook authors consider appropriate, representative, above all, capture attention, but are rarely thought-provoking. Prejudices and stereotypes abound.

As a result, one may deduce that despite the pedagogical intentions of the Andalusian Education Department when drawing up the objectives, there is no cultural framework that would articulate a more unified presentation of cultural systems. Thus, another secondary objective of this paper is to offer a preliminary answer to the above issues from a humanistic and global perspective.

*Review of cultural studies as applied to foreign language teaching*

Much has been written about what is missing in the EFL classroom when dealing with cultural aspects, '...teaching and learning of foreign languages around the world...has encountered difficulties...in the teaching of culture...' (Kramsch, 1993: i).

One main difficulty is the definition of the object of study, i.e., culture. The ideological conflicts stemming from the different disciplines have increased the classroom teacher's difficulties, in that not only is the definition of culture not

clear, but the concept is now so fragmented that it is extremely laborious to create a coherent framework for the integration of cultural materials in the EFL classroom. This difficulty is magnified if we consider the innumerable definitions of culture, the myriad of related disciplines (anthropology, psychology or sociology) and the varied perspectives of EFL teaching (North America, Europe or Asia, etc.).

Furthermore, the terminology used to identify different areas in the study of culture sometimes coincides, as in the term 'cultural studies' (CS), used to refer to 'the study of culture' which analyses ideological struggle in historical processes, work carried out, namely by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, and even a much older tradition related to the Chicago School of Social Thought represented by George Herbert Mead, 'which emphasizes, and studies, the construction of meaning and of "self" in social interaction', Wolfe (1999).

For example, in his book *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, Byram (1988) defines CS as 'a pedagogical activity' and 'an integral part of foreign language teaching' in which the teacher 'needs to consider the process of teaching and learning which might and already do take place and what learning outcomes are to be expected'. His bibliography clearly indicates that he has

adopted an anthropological approach. On the other hand, Sparks (1996: 14), in his review of the evolution of CS at the Birmingham School, states that: 'It is not possible to draw a sharp line and say that on one side of it we can find the proper province of cultural studies. Neither is it possible to point to a unified theory or methodology which are characteristic to it or of it. A veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns from literary criticism, sociology, history, media studies, etc., are lumped together under the convenient label of cultural studies.'

These two different conceptions of what CS means are further complicated by another popular term, 'cross-cultural studies'; which leads to another difficulty, namely the variety of prefixes added to the word 'cultural'. Dubin & Kuhlman (1992: v) define cross-cultural studies as the study of 'the existence of co-occurring cultures in many of the settings in which literacy skills in English are taught;... it is neutral in regard to fostering mutualism or adaptation', for example, comparing similarities and/or differences in reading and writing strategies used in diverse countries when teaching EFL and the difficulties encountered in each teaching context. The term cross-cultural "acknowledges all individuals' right to their native language and culture" (Dubin & Kuhlman, 1992: v).

On the other hand, intercultural studies examine distinct cultural groups in order to bring about conflict resolution, for example, racism in education. Quintana

Cabanas (1992, 10) defines intercultural studies as those which 'foresee a solution because they try to establish an active relationship between culture and interrelated attitudes of mutual knowledge and appreciation on behalf of the races that are living together..., as a basis for a reciprocal understanding and acceptance'.

Still another related term is multiculturalism. Bennet (1990) defines multicultural studies as "an approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices". Multicultural studies take place within or regarding a society made up of culturally distinct groups: for instance, teaching English in a culturally diverse classroom in which students come from diverse backgrounds with diverse cultural schemata but which to some extent must conform to the predominant culture.

The sociocultural perspective proposed in this paper may take place both in a culturally diverse (mostly ESL contexts) or a culturally homogeneous (mostly EFL contexts - such as the Andalusian) classroom. It involves constructing dialogic relationships that will allow for the resolution of contradictory aspects of personal constructs of cultures. Thus, this perspective proposes starting with

awareness materials, which will, hopefully, lead to a deeper understanding of varied personal constructs of the 'others' and the 'self'.

In view of the number of terms with distinct definitions related to the term culture and the impossibility of drawing up a sociocultural framework without at least a working definition, for the concept of culture, this study adapts and adopts Geertz's (1973: 89) formulation: culture is "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited concepts expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life".

*The teaching of culture from a sociocultural perspective*

The teaching of culture from a sociocultural perspective (see Fig. 1) would include contents (detailed in objectives and contents) related to *concepts*; contents related to *procedures*; contents related to *attitudes and values*; and contents related to *cross-cultural topics*, which link the three aforementioned major components. The benefit of such a framework is that it integrates concepts (mental schemata as well as grammatical notions), procedures (micro and macro strategies as well as co-operative behaviour skills), attitudes and values (constructive critical thinking skills) and cross-cultural topics (parallel issues which affect different countries) into every unit of teaching. Thus, students follow a process of self-development

in affective and emotional skills as well as intellectual abilities. The framework proposed ideally allows for the development of a person as a whole.

The contents related to *concepts* involve aspects (Bodley, 2000), such as acquiring knowledge of social organisation, religion or economy; acquiring knowledge of a complex set of interrelated ideas, symbols or behaviours which is patterned and shared by a society. For instance, when comparing ways of addressing people, Spanish-speakers use the formal 'usted' to address elders or people one has just met specially if they are older or have a 'higher' socio-economic status (bank manager, doctor). For English-speakers, there is no exact grammatical equivalent; therefore, EFL students must be aware that they can use, as rough equivalents, polite forms of address (i.e., Ms Smith) or perhaps more modalization.

The contents related to *procedures* refer to social heritage which is passed on from generation to generation; ways of solving problems in order to adapt to the environment or to life in the community (Bodley, 2000). In our framework, *procedures* comprise both socio-cultural knowledge, such as that previously mentioned, and the actual *instantiation* of cooperative attitudes (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1994). By this we mean that *procedures* also includes the actional competence in the use of cognitive strategies (repetition, key word, etc.), metacognitive strategies (planning, revising, redirecting objectives, etc.), and

social and affective strategies (task-centred cooperation, group-centred cooperation, etc.).

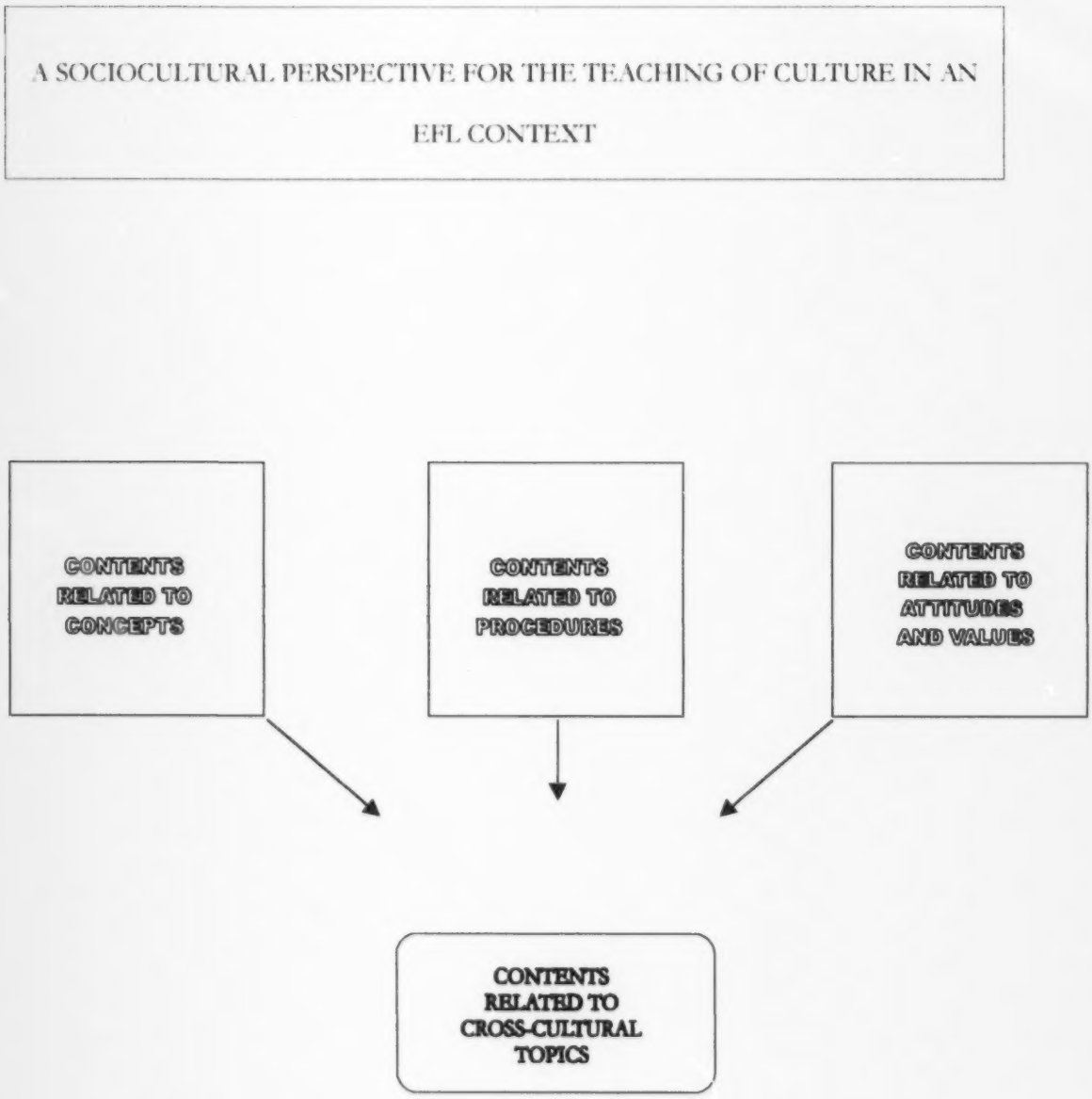
Loudness is a feature of Andalusian speech and life on the whole. English-speaking cultures often value less boisterous public behaviour. Andalusian teachers might, therefore, suggest that students make it a point to lower the volume of their speech when living in an English-speaking culture.

Language invariably transmits information about the person who is using it: his/her background, social status, sex, and nationality. Just as there is not a sole, monolithic Spanish culture, there is not one, unified English culture. Students should be aware of the fact that studying English as a foreign language should be preparing them to comprehend not only an English or American accent; they may at some point encounter Scottish, Irish or Australian accents. When studying English, students will certainly have difficulty getting used to local variants. Yet mastering the language is not only mastering variants; it is also mastering how to communicate in the relationships established by speakers in their different roles: equals (peer groups at school, work, home), superior - subordinate and viceversa (student – teacher, parents – children, manager – clerk).

The contents related to *attitudes and values* involve the appreciation of the ideals, values and norms of the own and other cultures, and recognition of contradictions in one's own cultural constructs to foster a better understanding of contradictions in the cultural constructs of others (Bodley, 2000). For instance, Andalusians are not rigorous about queuing; when at a bank, bus stop or waiting for a table at a restaurant, people hover around and have a notion about whom they are to follow but jumping the line is acceptable, although slightly annoying, yet it may even be considered clever to a certain extent. EFL students must, therefore, be aware of the fact that waiting patiently in lines may be expected of them when abroad.

The contents related to *cross-cultural topics* present issues that affect and reflect on students' cultural schemata (see sample activity presented in materials and methods). The activities and discussions are approached in such a way that students have freedom to openly criticise and express opinions regarding racism, sexism, beliefs, values and so on, as an outsider. Later the teacher leads the students to discover that similar discrimination is to be found in their immediate surroundings, thus enabling them to review own as well as other cultural schemata.

Fig. 1.


A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE TEACHING OF CULTURE IN AN EFL CONTEXT
CONTENTS RELATED TO CONCEPTS
CONTENTS RELATED TO PROCEDURES
CONTENTS RELATED TO ATTITUDES AND VALUES
CONTENTS RELATED TO CROSS-CULTURAL TOPICS

When teaching culture from a sociocultural perspective, we are not only valuing grammatical correctness and appropriate language use but also, contents related to cooperative procedures and to social commitment, such as the taking of turns, the ability to reach consensus, tolerance of ideas different to one's own, the facilitation of solutions rather than the extension of conflict, the expression of feelings, observation, or creativity.

*Materials and Methods for Teaching Culture from a Sociocultural Perspective*

This section offers a framework for presenting cultural materials in the EFL classroom by first suggesting a procedure for initial needs analysis, after which objectives and contents can be established.

I. Initial needs analysis

- What is the target level (age group and knowledge)?
- Which cultural aspect(s) will be dealt with?
- Why will a certain aspect and not another be treated?
- Which activity type is the most appropriate in the present context?
- How will the activity/activities be presented: integrated with the rest of the lesson?
- When will the activity be carried out and during how long?
- What additional activities might be needed as reinforcement?

## II. Objectives and Contents

### II.1. Objectives for:

CONCEPTS
Become tolerant with 'own' and 'other' cultural constructs
Learn to accept race, gender, belief, physical and intellectual difference
Learn to accept diversity, conflict and change as something natural
Become curious about people, things and learning
Become analytical and critical thinkers
Become social reformers committed to improving society
Become intellectually independent, constructively critical and selective

PROCEDURES
Acquire strategies to become socioculturally efficient
Develop committed social behaviour
Defend peaceful conflict resolution, dialogue and promote understanding
Detect and handle manipulation and discrimination
Give and receive positive feedback
Be observant of others
Check how our messages are received when we communicate

ATTITUDES AND VALUES
Respect life, bodies, mind, nature, animals and the environment
Encourage attitudes that react to the needs and interests of others
Encourage positive thinking and looking for good in life
Build confidence
Express feelings
Reinforce values such as self-esteem, tolerance, co-operation and empathy
Be open to different perspectives
Understand and value globalisation

CROSS-CULTURAL TOPICS
Develop cultural skills such as recognition, non-judgement, acceptance, integration, self-control, empowerment and respect
Learn to analyse similarities, differences, myths, stereotypes, facts and conflicts

## II.2. Contents for:

| CONCEPTS |
|---|
| Social symbols |
| Difference |
| Power |
| Institutions |
| Social behaviour patterns |
| Gender |
| Race |
| Marriage |
| Social Class |

| PROCEDURES |
|---|
| Highlight difference |
| Highlight discrimination |
| Compare tolerance and discrimination |
| Analyse a situation objectively |
| Criticise a situation constructively |

| ATTITUDES AND VALUES |
|---|
| Discrimination due to beliefs |
| Social acceptance |
| Social tolerance |
| Cultural diversity |
| Cultural acceptance |
| Cultural tolerance |
| Cultural discrimination |
| Friendship |
| Faithfulness |
| Respect |
| Empathy |

| CROSS-CULTURAL TOPICS |
|---|
| Acceptance vs rejection in societies |
| Different views on marriage, friendship, faithfulness, loyalty |
| Different views on self-respect and respect towards others |

III. The actual classroom methodology proposed goes through several successive phases:

I.1. Initial evaluation involves finding out the previous knowledge students have regarding the topic proposed. It not only aims to interest and motivate them but to make them want to research the topic outside the classroom and ideally practise it in their daily lives.

I.2. Awareness and performance. Instead of definitions, concrete examples are given; the closer to the students' daily routines, the better. The primary aim is always to attract students to another way of viewing the world that surrounds them.

I.3. Reinforcement and /or reformulation involves teachers' evaluation of the materials presented and the results. If the results have been effective there should be a slight modification in the students' behaviours and attitudes. If the activity has not produced the expected results, the teacher must reformulate the session from a different angle, thus offering follow-up as reinforcement.

I.4. Final evaluation assesses the whole procedure: materials, students, teacher, objectives and contents accomplishment.

The starting point is previous knowledge, the spiral procedure incorporates new input and then bears all of the acquired knowledge in mind to broaden concepts, procedures, attitudes and values, and cross-cultural awareness.

IV. Description of Activity Types

The activities promote acceptance and response, involve students, are closely connected to their surroundings, are as real-life as possible and help students contribute to themselves and to others by studying culture

together within listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar, phonetics and vocabulary activities.

V. Student and Teacher Roles

The main student roles these activities foster are: co-operation, participation, sharing and giving founded opinions, and taking decisions. Following the Vygostkian perspective, the teacher acts as supervisor and moderator of the students' progress. The learning process is viewed as a continuum and not only as a transferral of isolated facts. Therefore, an important attitude on the part of the teacher is to avoid imposing his or her opinion.

VI. Materials

The materials (photocopies of newspaper articles, magazines, videos and audio-tapes on current events) are meant to motivate, develop awareness, produce conflict and strategies to resolve it, and to encourage students to search for information in order to continue to develop outside the classroom.

VII. Evaluation Procedures

VII. 1. In order to be effective, evaluation must assess the whole procedure from the materials through to the students and the teacher. We must assess whether or not the methods and activities have been appropriate to the teaching situation and needs of the students. We will be evaluating the students and their learning strategies, attendance, participation, attention, initiative, homework, discipline, the personal background (this is fundamental in a conflict area where an improvement in behaviour and or attitude is the greatest of achievements); the teacher and his or her accuracy in carrying out the appropriate needs analysis, sequencing, and selection; the contents and objectives and whether or not they were appropriately sequenced and in accordance with the level.

VII.2. The evaluation parameters proposed are:

Reaction to task and reasoning: whether or not the task has interested the students and whether or not they incorporate the knowledge/awareness acquired to their daily behaviour; how students present their ideas (improvising, based on facts, from personal experience).

Participation and behaviour: students' contribution to the activity; how the students respond to individual/pair/group work, class discussion (respect in turn-taking, volume in discussions, politeness), work outside the classroom and so on.

*Sample Activity*

## FERESHTA AND NANAK

**Step One:**

*[The teacher presents the students with 2 stories of cultural conflict which are not within their immediate context in order to allow students to reflect upon them in a detached way. ]*

*Read the following cases. Give your personal opinion to answer the questions.*

**Case 1**. Fereshta Ludin is an immigrant from Afghanistan who received her education in Germany. She speaks perfect German. She studied at a German university and is qualified to teach at a German high school. She is religiously devoted and makes it a point to wear her black headpiece not only privately but also in public and consequently she also wears it to school. Shortly after starting work at her new high school, the Minister for Cultural Affairs in the state of Baden-Württemberg, decided not to allow Fereshta to continue working.[3]

. Is the headpiece a deliberate symbol of cultural segregation, that is, can it be considered a political and not a cultural symbol?

.What values and beliefs are at stake?

.What sort of discrimination is being exercised?

[3] Adapted from Wolfgang Klooss 'Immigration and Labour in Contemporary Canadian and German Writing' in *Gagner la vie*. Socio-Cultural Studies on Work and Life in Canada and Germany. Hans Braun and Wolfgang Klooss (eds.). l&f Verlag, Kiel, 1998

**Case 2.** Nanak Rai, is an immigrant from India. He received his education in Canada. His English is perfect, he has university qualifications and decides to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Due to religious convictions he must wear a turban but the Mounties where hats. In the end, the Canadian government authorised his wearing a turban instead of the hat.

.Is this respect for cultural convictions, an excess of tolerance or just a way of avoiding trouble?

.What may be the implications behind such tolerance?

.How far can one go in tolerating another culture?

**Step Two:** *[The teacher divides students into groups of five.]*

*Discuss the different answers and opinions regarding the two cases. Try not to argue. The objective is not changing other people's opinions but to exchange opinions and trying to reach consensus.*

**Step Three:** *[Students respond individually in writing and then share their responses.]*

.What values have you recalled?

.What were the attitudes of the individuals in your group?

.What concepts have been dealt with?

**Step Four: The Case of 'El Ejido'**

In February, 2000, three Spaniards were apparently murdered by Moroccans in the southern town of El Ejido. In response, youths rampaged through the streets, burning down immigrants' shacks and pelting them with stones.

.What values and beliefs are at stake?

.What sort of discrimination is being exercised?

**Step Five: Reinforcement**

*[The teacher asks the students to find a similar conflict and bring the story or an article to the class. The class works on the story in small groups or may select one of the stories to work on as a class, following the above steps.]*

The **objectives** for the sample activity are:

.Concepts: become tolerant with 'own' and 'other' cultural constructs.

.Procedures: defend peaceful conflict resolution and dialogue; promote understanding.

.Attitudes and Values: respect beliefs and be open to different perspectives.

.Cross-cultural topics: promote respect and acceptance.

The **contents** for the sample activity ares:

.Concepts: social symbols and difference.

.Procedures: highlight difference and discrimination; compare tolerance and discrimination; analyse a situation objectively and criticise a situation constructively.

.Attitudes and Values: social acceptance and tolerance, cultural diversity and discrimination.

.Cross-cultural topics: analyse facts and conflicts.

The purpose of this activity was to offer the students opportunities to reflect upon two possible solutions to cultural conflict, first in a detached fashion and then, in the reinforcement, working with a case that is taken from their immediate context. In this way, students are at liberty to express their ideas about other cultures, which in no way endangers their personal cultural constructs. To their surprise, they will find that, in the reinforcement phase, the same or similar case can be found in their own immediate cultural context. This part of the

exercise allows the students to discover the justifications they attempt to use during their own reasoning process.

*Conclusion*

In this article we have presented the objectives for sociocultural aspects as stipulated by the Spanish Ministry of Education, whose guidelines proved to be too vague for use in actual Spanish EFL classrooms. In addition, a survey of frequently used EFL textbooks in the Spanish secondary school context indicated the need for a framework for the teaching of culture from a sociocultural perspective. For our teaching context, the framework was required to include specific objectives leading to concrete contents related to concepts, procedures, attitudes and values and cross-cultural topics. The advantage of this framework, is that concepts, in particular, grammatical concepts, do not preside over didactic materials for working on procedures and attitudes. Each of the three blocks of contents is integrated into every didactic unit. In this way, students learn not only the principles of autonomy and co-operation, but are also required to use them in their information seeking activities.

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